

ABRAHAM'S TRYALL:

A Sermon preached
at the Spittle, in Easter
Week, 1653.

By George Burdett
Dell of the City.



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1653.



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EXAMIN
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To the Right VVorshipfull

Sir Henry Killigrew Knight,

Grace in this life, and

glory in the life
to come.

Among all the worthy histories of the Saints which are registred in the booke of God, there is not any one example of faith and obedience comparable (as I suppose) to Abraham: who as he was the father of all the faithfull Rom. 4. 11. so he is propounded to all the heires of promise, as a most worthie patterne for imitation. And to this end the Lord as he had indued him with an excellent measure of his grace, so by a correspondencie of trials proportionable to his faith, he hath manifested the same to the world: that all those which professe themselves to be the sonnes of Abraham, might either imitate his faith and obedience, or else know themselves to be none of his children. For which cause the holy Apostles Paul

and I am not creating of the causes
whereby a man is iustified, the other of the
effects and fruits whereby a man is knowne
to be iustified, the one prouing that we are iusti-
fied by faith alone without works, the other
concluding that we are iustified by such a
faith as is not alone, or without works: both
propound the example of Abraham as a
rule, the one of that iustification whereby we
are made iust; to wit, by imputatiō of Christs
righteousnes apprehended by faith, the other
of that whereby we are declared to be iust,
namely by the fruits of faith, which are good
works, Paule therefore prouing that we are
iustified by faith without works, that is, by
imputation of Christs righteousnes alone,
which is apprehended by faith, argueth from
the example of Abraham to this effect: that
as he was iustified, so are we, Rom. 4. 23. 24.
he was iustified by faith without works, that
is, by imputation of Christs righteousnes ap-
prehended by faith, without respect of any
righteousnes inherent in himselfe, therefore
wee are iustified by faith, without works.
Iames disputing against vaine mē Chap. 2.
v. 20. who thought to be iustified by an
counterfeit faith, proueth from the
example

Dedication.

example of Abraham, that we must be
iustified by such a faith as is not without
works. For by such a faith as Abraham was
iustified; must we be iustified: Abraham
was iustified not by an idle or dead faith, but
by a lively faith working by love, as appeareth
especiallie by that example recorded, Gen.
22. Therefore howsoever we are iustified by
faith alone, yet we are not iustified by such
a faith as is alone: but as we are iustified by
faith alone, that is, made iust by imputation
of Christs righteousness, which is apprehen-
ded by faith alone: so we are iustified, that
is, declared and knowne to be iust by good
works, which are the fruits of faith. Abra-
ham therefore as you see, is propounded to
all the faithfull as a patterne in both re-
spects. So that if we would be esteemed the
sonnes of Abraham (as all the faithfull are)
we must looke to be iustified as he was, and
by such a faith. The Papists therefore, who
seeke Iustification by works, that is, inherent
righteousnes, are not the sonnes of Abra-
ham. For those who are of faith, that is,
who seeke iustification by faith and not by
workes, are the children of Abraham,
Gal. 3. 7. No more is the carnall Gospell

...by such a faith as
...of righteousness
...your faith John. 8.
...the sonnes of Abraham,
...the works of Abraham.
...Abraham though he were iustified by
...alone, yet he was not iustified by such
...faith as is alone. But howsoeuer the no-
...table faith of Abraham whereby he was
...justified before God, and his dutifull obedi-
...ence whereby he was knowne and declared
...to be iust, appeareth in many particulars re-
...corded by Moses, yet then especially he ap-
...proved both his faith and obedience, when
...he was emoynd by a commaundement of
...tryall, to sacrifice his owne and onely sonne
...Isaac. For by this greatest tryall the Lords
...purpose was to manifest to the world his
...greatest faith and rarest obedience: and in
...respect of both to commend him to all suc-
...ceeding generations, as a most liuely patterne
...to be followed of all the heires of promise.
...For which cause as I thought this notable
...story of Abrahams tryall most worthie to be
...handled in this Easters solemnitie: so others
...haue desired, and I haue yeelded, that the
...Sermon wherein it was handled, should be
...made

made more publicke for the benefit of more
then did heare me. Being therefore to pub-
lish this Sermon as the first fruits of mine
english labours, I thought good to dedicate
the same to your Worship, to whom with
your louing brother, and the veruous Lady
your wife, I am for great benefits excee-
dingly bound: that there might remaine
some memoriall both of your bountifullnes,
and of my thankesfulnes. Accept there-
fore (I pray you) according to your accu-
stomed fauour this commendation of Abra-
hams faith and obedience. And as hitherto
you haue (to Gods glory be it spoken, and to
the good example of others) shewed your
selfe to be one of the sonnes of Abraham:
so my desire is, that this example of Abra-
ham commended vnto you, may be some in-
couragement for you, to continue to the end
in that course wherein you haue long wal-
ked. That imitating still the faith of Abra-
ham, and treading in the steps of his obe-
dience vnto the end, you may be sure after
the labours of this life to rest in Abrahams Luk. 16. 32.
bosome, where you shall receiue the end of
your faith, which is the saluation of your 1. Pet. 1. 9.
soule by the precious merits of Iesus Christ,

Adm.

18 of Aprill 1602.

Your Worships in the Lord

George Deane.



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SYNOVIS OR BRIEF VIEW

of the particulars contained in this Sermon.

Proposition, where three questions are discussed. 1. Whether God tempteth any to euill. 2. In what sense he is said to haue tempted *Abraham*. 3. To what end he tempted him.

Vocation or call, preparing *Abraham* to the triall.

God prouing *Abraham*, which is two fold, his

Decretes of that which he was to forgo, amplified by the Lord in foure degrees, commanding him to sacrifice

Commandment, containing the triall, which appeareth to be great, both by the

Explication of the text, diuided into 3

Circumstances of

Time when this commandment was to be performed.

Place in which. General, noted to be a Mill in the course of *Morish*. Particular, left indefinite.

Hard onely to forgo, but more hard by death, and that a violent death.

Manneres of that which he was to undergo, shewed by the

Affliction to his son whom it had bin

Consent to his death. Deliver him to be killed. Bee present at his slaughter.

Substance of the worke, that he was to offer Isaac for a burnt sacrifice, which

Hardest to kill him with his owne hands, and that as a burnt sacrifice.

Narration, declaring the action of

Obedience. Unlawfull. Venerable. which

and that as a burnt sacrifice.

offer Isaac for a burnt sacrifice, which was very hard in respect of his

Obedience with which how could it stand to do an act so scandalous to man?

Allegiance to God, viz. his

1. Absolute & simple.
2. Resolute & serious
3. Speedy and ready.
4. Not headie or for a brunt, but discreet, temperate, constant, and courageous.

Obedience, which was

Abraham approving his

Faith: for how could he believe in the promises concerning Isaac's seed, and yet himselfe kill him, and consume him to ashes, before he had any seed?

Faith, being assured that although Isaac were consumed to ashes, yet the promise of God concerning Isaac should be fulfilled.

Right hand, by temporal benefits. } Offered.

Conferred.

Left hand, by crosses.

Temporal.

Spiritual.

Subjects, that is, the men who are tried, viz. Hypocrites. } Sound Christians.

Application in respect of

Gods proving Abraham, that he w^old try men, and that diversely: but his trials may be distinguished by the

Deny our selves. } Think nothing too deere for God.
Resolute before hand to do what soever God shall command.

Abraham approving himselfe, that if we would be esteemed his children (as all the faithfull are) we must imitate both his

Faith in believing the promises of God. Working by love.

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SYNONYME

of the same word

in the same sense

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ABRAHAM'S TRIAL.

Iud. Quid. Gen. 22. 1. to the 13.

1 *After these things it came to passe that God himselfe tempted Abraham, and said vnto him, Abraham: who answered, Here am I.*

2 *And he said, Take now thy sonne, thine only sonne, whom thou louest, euen Isaac, and go thy waies vnto the land of Moriah, and offer him vp there for a whole burnt offering vpon one of the mountaines, which I will tell thee.*

3 *Then Abraham rose vp early in the same morning, and saddled his asse, and tooke two of his seruants with him, and Isaac his sonne, and clone wood for the burnt offering, and rose vp and went to the place which God had told him.*

4 *The third day Abraham lift vp his eyes, and saw the place a farre off.*

5 *And Abraham said to his seruants, Stay here with the asse: for I and this youtb*

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will

Abrahams trial.

will goe yonder and worship, and come again vnto you.

6 *Then Abraham tooke the wood for the burnt offering, and laid it vpon Isaac his sonne, and he tooke the fire in his hand and the knife, and they both went together.*

7 *And Isaac spake to his father & said, My father. And he answered, Here am I, my sonne. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lambe for the burnt offering?*

8 *Then Abraham answered, God will provide him a lambe for a burnt offering, my sonne: and so they two went together.*

9 *And whē they came to the place which God had told him, Abraham builded an altar there, and couched the wood, and bound Isaac his sonne, and laid him on the altar vpon the wood.*

10 *And Abraham stretching forth his hand, tooke the knife to kill his sonne.*

11 *But the Angell of the Lord called vnto him from beauen, saying, Abraham, Abraham. And he answered, Here am I.*

12 *Then he said, Lay not thine hand vpon the young man, neither doe any thing*

to him: for now I know thou fearest God,
seeing for my sake thou hast not spared
thine only sonne.



IN this chapter the Holie
ghost hath recorded the
memorable historie of
Abrahams temptation
by God himself concer-
ning the immolation of
Isaac, pretended by God, and intended
by *Abraham*, vnto the 11. verse: and the
euents thereupon ensuing, in the rest of
the chapter.

The storie of the temptation confi-
steth on two parts: the proposition in
the first words, containing both the ar-
gument of the storie, and the scope and
purpose of God in this busines, viz. that
God tempted *Abraham*: and the nar-
ration in the rest of the words, vnto the
11. verse. Wherein is declared both the
action of God tempting, and the beha-
uiour of *Abraham* when he was temp-
ted. In the proposition the Holie ghost
giueth vs, and all that shall reade or
heare this storie, an item, or watch-
word, that howsoeuer *Abraham* was to

Abrahams triall.

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vnderstand the commaundement following, concerning the killing and sacrificing of his owne sonne, as a serious precept, the omission whereof had been sinne vnto him, and an honouring of his sonne more then God: yet notwithstanding the Lord bad him offer his sonne, not because he would haue *Isaac* sacrificed, but *Abrahams* faith and obedience tried. Which also appeareth by the euent, vers. 11. 12. where the Lord, who is not chaunged, by a contrarie commaundement signifieth that hee did inquire (as *Ambrose* saith) his affection, and not require the fact: and as another, he did approoue in the intent and desire, which he disprooued in the performance. Now this warning that God did but tempt *Abraham* was necessarily to be giuen, lest men vnderstanding the commaundement following, as a serious precept which God would haue fulfilled, might imagine that God is pleased with sacrificing of men, or might iustly ground their diuellish practise of sacrificing their children vpon this commaundement of God.

This admonition therefore teacheth

VS

*Affectum
meum in-
qui-
siui, non fa-
ctum exegi.*

Ambros.

*In uoto pro-
bati quod
in facto re-
uini. August.
de tempore
Serm 73.*

vs to vnderstand the commaundement following, as the question which our Sauour propounded to *Philip* concerning the feeding of five thousand men, *Ioh. 6. 5, 6. Whence shall we buy bread that all these may eate : this he said tempting him, for himselfe knew what he was purposed to doe.* So in this place God saith to *Abraham*, Goe offer thy sonne to me for a burnt sacrifice. This he said tempting him, for himself knew what he was purposed to doe, viz. to trie, and by trial to manifest *Abrahams* faith and obedience, and to propound the same to all ages following, as a most worthie patterne to be followed. But whereas it is said that God tempted *Abraham*, for so the words are (*haelohim nissah*) and the Apostle speaking of this matter, *Hebr. 11. 17. By faith* (saith he) *Abraham* *πειρασεν*, when he was tempted, offered *Isaac*, diuers questions may not vnprofitable be moued: and first whether God tempteth any man or not. For *Iames* saith, chap. 1. 13. that *God tempteth no man*, and therefore that no man *πειρασεται* when he is tempted, may say that he is tempted of God. And yet *Moses* here

saith that he tempted, and as the seuentic Interpreters read *ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄγγελοι*, and accordingly the Apostle Hebr. 11.17. meaneth that *Abraham* *ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄγγελοι*, where he was tempted, was tempted of God.

I answer by distinction, that temptations are either prouocations to euill, or probations and trials. Of temptations as they are prouocations to euill, God is not the author; neither doth he tempt any vnto sinne, as *Iames* saith, but the diuell as the principall, who is therefore called the tempter, *ἡμεῖς δὲ ἄγγελοι*, the world and the flesh as his seruitors. For from the flesh, that is our owne corruption, arise euill and noysome concupiscences which fight against our soule, whereby we are tempted and stirred vp to euill.

1. Pet. 2. 11.
Iam. 1. 14.

The world is said to tempt in respect of men in the world, or worldly things. Men tempt either by words counselling, alluring, incenling and prouoking to sin, or by deed and example. Worldly things whereby men are tempted are either the desires of the world drawing to euill, or the terrors of the world withdrawing from good.

The

The diuell tempteth either immediatly by casting bad motions as it were fire darts into mens hearts, which are called his suggestions : or mediately by meanes, vsing either as his instruments sometimes the flesh, that is our own corruption, which is as it were the diuels bawd prostituting the soule to his temptations, or the mediation of other men sometimes friends sometimes foes, who are as it were the diuels brokers : or else as objects and occasions either the desires of the world which he vseth in respect of the *exterior*, that is getting as baites of sinne, and in regard of *interior*, that is the vsing, as the snares of sinne, or the terrors of the world, which are as it were the diuels bugbeares to scarre vs from welldoing. As touching these temptations therefore which are prouocations to euill, wee conclude with *Iames 1.13.* *Let no man when he is tempted say I am tempted of God : for God as he is atriens & ὁ θεὸς οὐκ ἐκείνῳ one that cannot be tempted to euill, so he tempteth no man, namely to euill.*

But you will say, God tempteth *Abraham* to kill his own sonne which is a

Abrahams triall.

sinne, and elsewhere he is said to harden mens hearts, to leade them into temptation, &c.

Ans. Whether this particular whereunto *Abraham* was tempted were a sin or not, I will anon discusse in the person of *Abraham*. In the meane time this generall assertion is to bee retained, that God tempteth, that is, prouoketh no man vnto sinne.

Ob. Why then doe we pray that he would not leade vs, or as the word *πειρασμος* signifieth, that he would not carrie or bring vs into temptation?

Answ. It is one thing to tempt, and another to leade into temptation: as it is one thing to execute punishment on a malefactor, and another to deliuer him ouer to the executioner; the one is the act of the hangman, the other is the act of the Iudge. So the diuell tempteth and God leadeth into temptation. For the better vnderstanding whereof wee are to know that there be three degrees of the Lords dealing in this case. For first the Lord sometimes bringeth his seruants to be tempted, as it were his champions into the lists of the combat
to

to be encountred and tried, that his graces in them may appeare, but not to be foyled, and much lesse overcome or vtterly vanquished. Thus our Saviour Christ was carried of the spirit into the wildernes to be tempted of the diuell, Matth. 4. 1. Thus *Iob* was permitted, yea and committed into the hands of *Satan* to be tempted.

Secondly, the Lord sometimes deliuereth men to be tempted, and leaueth them for the instant to take a foyle, either for a chastisement or a triall, that they might be humbled at the sight of their owne weakenes, and bee made more circumspect for the time to come. Thus the Lord left *Ezechias* when the Embassadors of *Babylon* came vnto him that he might tempt, that is, prooue him, and know, that is, make knowne all that was in his heart, 2. Chro. 32. 31. The like may be said of *Dauid* and *Peter* when they fell.

Thirdly, the Lord sometimes deliuereth men ouer to the diuell as his executioner, or to their owne lusts, not onely to be tempted, but to be overcome and to be carried headlong into sinne,

Rom. 1. 24.
26. 28.

Exod. 15. 32.
Ephes. 4. 19.

as a iust punishment of their former sinnes. For howsoeuer men thus giuen ouer do as it were take a felicitie in sinning, yet of all punishments that can befall a man in this life, this is the most dreadfull iudgement. In this sense therefore God is said to lead men into temptation, as also to harden mens hearts, not that he tempteth, that is, prouoketh any to sinne, or infuseth sin into them, nor that hee hardeneth, that is, of soft maketh hard, but that they being hard and in the slauerie of sinne and Satan already, he giueth them ouer for a iust punishment of their former sins, further to bee hardned and enthralled: which hardnes and thraldome they further gather to themselves willingly, hardening their owne hearts, and committing sin with greedines. It cannot therefore be prooued that God tempteth any, and yet it cannot be denied but that in all temptations he hath a stroke. For this is a certaine truth, that nothing can happen *in scio aut inuito Deo*, without Gods knowledge or against his will. For his knowledge is omniscient, and nothing can escape it, his will is omnipotent,

tent, and nothing can resist it. The diuell therefore cannot tempt a man, vnlesse God would haue him tempted; nor foile him, vnlesse God would haue him foiled; nor vanquish him, vnlesse God would haue him vanquished. And although the diuell in tempting, and the man which yeeldeth to the temptation doe both sinne; yet by their sinnes the Lord bringeth to passe his owne good worke. As for example, the chastisement, triall, or amendement of his seruant, or the iust punishment of the wicked. And howsoeuer the diuell and wicked men in respect of their will and indouour rebelliously oppose themselues against the will of God; yet the euent is no other then God hath appointed, God in his infinite wisdomme and almightie prouidence, so ouer-ruling the actions of all his creatures, that when they thinke nothing lesse then to doe the will of God, they become his instruments vnwittingly for the effecting of his designes, as *August.* saith *ad Laurent. cap. 100. Hoc quippe ipso quod contra Dei voluntatem fecerunt, de ipsis facta est voluntas Dei:* But we must distinguish betwixt

betwixt the euill worke of the bad instrument and the good worke of God, which by the euill instrument he bringeth well to passe, which is neuer the worse for the bad instrument, as it is neuer the better for the good. As for example, when a malefactor (whom the Magistrate perhaps suffereth to goe vnpunished) falleth into the hands of theeues and is murthered, the iudgement of God vpon him is no lesse iust, then if he had been put to death by the Magistrate. Albeit the instruments by whom this iudgement is executed, are wicked murtherers. Thus through the enuious sending of *Ioseph* by his brethren, who therein set themselues against the will of God reuealed in *Iosephs* dreames, the Lord in mercie sendeth him to be a father vnto *Pharao*, and a fosterer of his Church, *Genesis* 45.7. and 50.20. By the filthie incest shamefully committed by *Absolom*, the Lord iustly punisheth the adulterie of *Dauid*, 2. *Sam.* 12.11.12. By the treacherous, vniust, enuious giuing ouer of our Sauour to death, by *Iudas*, *Pilate*, and the Priests, the Lord in vnspeakeable

able mercie gaue his sonne to death for vs, Act. 2. 23. and 4. 28. So by the wicked and malitious temptations of Satan, who therein seeketh the ruine and perdition of the faithfull, the Lord furthereth their saluation, sometimes chastising them for their amendement, sometimes trying their faith and obedience, sometimes exercising them to humilitie and mortification of sinne, alwaies so onerruling the malice of the diuell, that euen in his temptations, wherein he intendeth nothing but their harme and destruction, he becommeth (maugre his spite) the instrument of God to further their saluation.

Thus then it appeareth that God tempteth no man vnto euill, and that howsoeuer the Lord hath a hand in all temptations which be vnto euill, yet he worketh no euill, but vseth, ordereth, and disposeth them vnto good, and so ouerruleth all his creatures, that when they intend and doe euill to their owne damnation, they are the instruments of God to aduance his glorie and further the saluation of the elect. The which doctrine as it ministreth singular comfort

fort to the faithfull, vnto whose good al things, euen the temptations of Satan, doe worke together, Rom. 8:28: So it serueth to discover the diuellish malice of the Papiists, & namely of the shamelesse author of the twelue Articles, who is not ashamed to publish in print, that wee not onely make God the author of sinne, which is blasphemous, but the only cause of sinne, and (that which the diuell would haue bin ashamed to vtter in his owne person) that wee make God worse thē the diuell, Articl. 10. But I conclude this point with *Fulgentius, ad Monimum. lib. 1. pag. 57. Deus itaq; licet author non sit malarum cogitationum, ordinator est tamen malarum voluntatum, & de malo opere cuiuslibet mali, non desinit ipse bonum operari*: That is, God therefore although hee be not the author of euill thoughts, yet he is an orderer or disposer of bad willes, and by the bad worke of euery wicked one, he ceaseth not to effect that which is good.

Hitherto wee haue spoken of the former kinde of temptations which are prouocations to euill, in which sense God tempteth no man. The other kind

are

are probations or trials, in which sense God in diuers places of the Scripture is said to tempt, that is, to trie or to proue men, and that diuersly, as we shall heare anon.

But it wil be said, that *tentare*, to tempt or trie a man, is to take an experiment of him that is tried, presupposing in him that tempteth either ignorance or doubting at the least : the former whereof is a priuation or absence, the latter a defect and want of knowledge ; but neither is incident to the alknowing God, who with one eternall view or act of vnderstanding, doth at once perfectly and distinctly know al things that haue been, are, or shall be. It may therefore be demanded in the next place in what sense God is said, who knoweth all men better then themselues, to tempt or proue them.

I answere, that tempting or prouing doth not alwaies presuppose ignorance or doubting in him that tempteth. For there are two sorts of tempting or prouing : the one when a man tempteth to take an experiment of that which hee knew not, or doubted of ; as when a ma-
ster

ster trieth the fidelitie of his seruant, or one friend the good will of another, whereof he is not sufficiently perswaded. The other, when one tempteth, to cause the partie tempted to giue an experiment of that which hee alreadie knoweth: as when a Schoolemaster calleth forth one of his best schollers, and apposeth him in such questions as hee can answer. The end of both indeed is experimentall knowledge: but of the former, the knowledge of him that tempteth, that hee may by experience know somewhat whereof before he was ignorant or doubtfull: of the latter, the knowledge, not of him that tempteth, but of him that is tempted, and also of others. In the former sense, tempting cannot properly be attributed to God, yet vnproperly and after the manner of men, it may. For euen as God is said to be angrie or sorie, or to repent, *Non quantum ad affectum, sed quantum ad effectum*: Not in regard of the affection which is not incident vnto God, but of the effect, whē he doth that which a man would doe when he is angrie, or sorie, or repenteth: So God may be said
to

to tempt metaphorically, when as after
the similitude of a man he saith or doth
any thing whereby the minde and dis-
position of him that is tempted may ap-
peare either to himselfe or to others.
And as this is spoken here *Abraham*,
that is by a metaphore take from men,
so afterwards vers. 12. when hee saith,
now I know, that is, now I haue expe-
rience or experimentall knowledge:
for thereunto tempting directly ten-
doth. But in the latter sense tempting
may properly be ascribed to God, who
is then said to tempt, when he bringeth
men into triall, and causeth them to
giue an experiment of that which is in
them, that their minde and disposition
may be manifested, not to God (before
whose eyes all things, be they neuer so
secret, are *phura* *et* *transparentia* *dei* *ut* *vis* *per* *oc-*
ulos *ipsius*, that is, naked, and as it were cut *Heb. 4. 13.*
through the backe bone) but to them-
selves and to others. In this sense God
is said to haue tempted *Abraham*, when
he caused him to giue an experiment to
the world of his excellent faith and o-
bedience: and answerably hee is said
vers. 12. now to know that *Abraham*

C

feared

feared God, when *Abraham* had giuen
a good experiment of it, as *Procopius* fit-
ly expoundeth those words, *Nunc noui,*
i. nunc specimen eius rei dedisti eximum.
And thus tempting, which in the for-
mer sense is attributed to God ~~et deorum~~
~~de~~ after the manner of men, is accor-
ding to the latter sense vnderstood ~~du-~~
~~mu~~ as it becometh God, as *Athanasius*
speaketh.

De Sancta
Trin. lib. 1.

Now if it be further objected, that if
God would take triall of *Abrahams*
faith and obedience, hee should haue
tried him rather whiles he was yonger,
and before he had giuen so many testi-
monies of his faith and obedience: for
it may seeme strange that he would trie
a tried seruant: I answere, according to
that which hath been said, that God ta-
keth triall of his seruants to another
end then men doe. Men take triall of
their seruants, because they would haue
experience of their fidelitie, which is
not sufficiently knowne ynto them.
But God, to whom the secrets of all
hearts are knowne, needeth not make
triall of men to this end, that hee might
learne something which before hee
knew

knew not. But hee is said to trie men,
when hee causeth them to giue experi-
ments of that which he perfectly know-
eth, and that either to themselues or to
others. To themselues, for as *Augustine*
well saith, *Nescit se homo nisi in tentatio-*
ne discat se: A man knowes not himselfe
thoroughly, vnlesse by temptation he hath
experience of himselfe. For men many
times ouerweene their owne gifts, and
therefore God bringeth them into trial
that they may see their owne weaknes,
that seeing it they may be humbled, and
being humbled they may be more fer-
uent in prayer, more circumspect of
their waies, and as it were more ialous
ouer their owne hearts. Thus the Lord
afflicted the Israelites in the wilderness,
that hee might tempt them and know
what was in their hearts, whether they
would obserue his precepts or not: that
is, that by their afflictions and trials he
might discouer vnto them their owne
weakenes and vnabilitie to keepe his
law, and that they by this means might
be driuen vnto Christ, Deut. 8. 2. The
like may be said of *Ezechias*, 2. Chron.
32. 31. whom the Lord left to himselfe

De tempore
Serm. 72.

for a time, that he might tempe him and know whatsoeuer was in his heart. On the other side, men sometimes excell-
 ing in humilitie, are defective in thank-
 fulnes, too much preiudging their own gifts, and therefore the Lord bringeth them also to triall, that they seeing his graces in themselves, may be thankfull ynto him for them. What shall we say then? *Sic ergo ignarus est Deus rerū &c.* (saith *Augustine*) Is God therefore so ignorant of humane affaires, so vnacquainted with mens hearts, that hee should by tempting seeke to finde men? No, but that man should finde himselfe. For (as hee also saith) there are many things in a man hidden and unknowne ynto himselfe, which are not manifested or made knowne, but in temptations. And as the Lord by tēptations maketh men knowne to themselves, so also to others. First, in respect of their frailtie, that we by their example may become more circumspect, especially if they whose example we behold, were better and stronger then our selues. For if *Danid*, if *Ezechias*, if *Peter*, when they were tempted, bewrayed their weaknes, how had

*De tempore
Serm. 72.*

Ibid.

had we need to watch and to pray that wee enter not into temptation. Secondly, in respect of their faith and constancie, that wee seeing their good examples may both glorifie God, and stirre vp our selues to their imitation.

But as touching the tried seruants of God, such as *Abraham* and *Iob* were, this may be said in briefe; that the Lord trieth them, that his graces in them, as their faith, loue, obedience, constancie, patience, may be manifested not onely to themselves, both to minister comfort vnto them, and to stirre them vp to thankfulness, but especially to others, vnto whom the Lord propoundeth them as notable patternes to be imitated. For euen as schoolemasters sometimes call forth some of their most toward schollers, and take exact triall of them, partly to approoue their owne paines, and partly to stirre vp their other schollers to greater diligence; so the Lord maketh choise of some of his principall seruants of whom he taketh exquisite triall, to manifest his graces in them, both to themselves and also to others, who comparing their own wants

with their perfections, and perceiuing how farre short they are of that perfection which they are to aspire vnto, may be stirred vp to a daily increase in pietie. And to conclude this point with *Augustine, Sermon. 72. de temp.* where hauiug shewed that *Abraham* was tempted, that he might be the better knowne to himselfe, he addeth: And if *Abraham* were knowne to himselfe, yet hee had not been knowne to vs. Verely he was to be manifested either to himselfe or to vs. To himselfe, that hee might know wherefore to giue thanks: to vs, that we might know either what to begge of God, or what to imitate in the man.

So much may suffice to haue spoken of the proposition: wherein wee haue discussed these three questions: first, whether the Lord who is here said to haue tempted *Abraham* to kill his own sonne, doth tempt any man vnto euill: and secondly, if the Lord tempt none to euill, then in what sense he is said to tempt *Abraham*, namely to try or proue him: and thirdly, to what end the Lord, who by himselfe knoweth all things, tempted and proued *Abraham*, which

Augustine

Augustine briefly noteth, *Vi manifeste- De tempore*
tur mundo, qui iam notus fuerat Deo: That *serm. 73.*

he might be manifested to the world,
who was alreadie knowne to God.

Now we are to proceed to the narra-
tion, wherein this great triall of *Abra-*
ham is declared. And in the narration
we are to consider two things, the actiō
of God tempting, and the behaviour of
Abraham when he was tempted. The
action of God is twofold, his vocation
or call, whereby hee prepareth *Abra-*
ham to vndergoe this triall, vers. 1. Se-
condly, his commandement, whereby
he trieth him, vers. 2. As touching the
former: Seeing the thing here inioyned
to *Abraham*, namely that hee should
with his own hands kill his sonne *Isaac*,
and offer him for a burnt sacrifice, was
in shew not onely most cruell and vn-
natural, but also repugnant to the com-
maundements and promises of God:
therefore this is to be presupposed as a
most certaine truth and taken for gran-
ted, that *Abraham* was as certainly and
infallibly assured, as a man can be cer-
taine of any thing, that it was the Lord
himselfe which gaue him this comman-
dement.

detrent. For if *Abraham* could but haue
 suspected, that it was not the Lord
 which spake vnto him; how easily
 might he yea and how resolutely ought
 he to haue repelled this temptation, as
 being not so likely to be a serious com-
 mandement of God, as an instigation
 of Satan, who might seeme thereby to
 prouoke him to murder his only sonne,
 and by sacrificing him to cut off the
 promises concerning the blessed seede
 of *Isaac*. But the Lord so fully enlighte-
 ned his minde, so powerfully affected
 his will, so certainly assured him of the
 truth of this reuelation, as that he could
 not possibly once doubt thereof. To
 this end the Lord speaketh familiarly
 to him and calleth him by his name, *A-*
braham, that he might duly attend, and
 aduisedly consider who it was that spake
 vnto him: And then hauing receiued
 his answer, *Here am I*, wherein *Abra-*
ham shewed himselfe not onely assured
 of the person that spake to him, but al-
 so resolved to put in execution whatso-
 euer he should commaund: then I say
 he propoundeth the commandement,
 whereof I am now to speake. But first
 with

with this protestation, that it containeth the greatest triall that euer any meere man was exercised withall, and indeed farre greater then I in my weakness am able to set forth vnto you, according to the worthines of the matter. Neither are you to maruell hereat, as though the Lord dealt hardly with *Abraham* whom thus hardly he tempted, nor yet to please your selues that you are not tried after the same measure. For seeing the Lord is faithfull, and suffereth none of his children to be tempted aboue their strength, therefore hee proportioneth their temptations and trials, according to the measure of grace bestowed vpon them. Hence it is that the best seruants of God haue endured the greatest trials: and accordingly *Abrahams* strongest faith is proued by the greatest triall, whereas the weaker faith of others, is exercised by easier temptations. For what Schoolemaster that seeketh by triall to encourage or approue his scholler, and to commend him to others (as the Lord doth his tried seruants) will appose a petite that learneth his A, B, C, in Greeke or in Hebrew?

God in try-
ing his ser-
uants ob-
serueth a
Geometri-
call pro-
portion.

Hebrew? But trials are proportioned to mens strength, the strongest faith hath the greatest trials, the weakest faith hath the least trials, and where are no trials, it is a signe of no faith.

Now that *Abrahams* triall was exceeding great, it may evidently appeare by those two things whereby the greatnes of trials is to be esteemed, to wit, the deerenes of that which he was to forgo, and the hardnes of that hee was to vndergoe. The summe of both is, that hee was to sacrifice *Isaac*. The deerenes of that which he was to forgoe, is of purpose amplified by the Lord himselfe to increase the triall, in foure degrees, plainly distinguished in the originall text. Take now (saith he) *eth bincha*, thy sonne, *eth iebidcha*, thy only sonne, *asher ababta*, whom thou louest, *eth ytsak*, euen *Isaac*; and offer him for a burnt sacrifice. Take thy sonne; thine only sonne, whom thou louest, euen *Isaac*. Alas, what needed all these words? had it not bin sufficient to breake his heart, to haue said, take thy sonne and offer him, but he must be put in minde that he was his onely sonne whom he loued, euen *Isaac*
his

his ioy? But the Lord hauing giuen him strength to beare, laieth loadē vpon him, and by euery word which is added, he addeth to the weight.

For a father to lose his son, especially by death, & that violent death, it is a greater grief the any man can conceiue that is not a father, such a *συμψυχή* or naturall loue God hath implanted in parents, who therefore desire to die before their children, and exceedingly grieue if they suruiue them; but especially in godly parents, and heroicall natures, wherein these *συμψυχή* are most effectuall; but most especially in *Abraham*, in whom this *φιλία* did excell, who as he had long wanted, so did he most earnestly desire, and highly esteeme of a sonne, in so much that without him he little esteemed of all outward blessings besides. For whereas God had by his promise (Gen. 15. 1. 2.) encouraged him, *Fear not, Abraham, I am thy buckler, and thine exceeding great reward.* O Lord God (saith he) *what wilt thou giue me, seeing I got childlesse?* And therefore to lose him whom he so greatly desired, and highly esteemed, must needs in all likelihood

lihood be an exceeding great griefe vnto him. How did *David* lament the death of *Absalom* his rebellious sonne, when he wept and said, *O my sonne Absalom, my sonne, my sonne Absalom, would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my sonne my sonne!* 2. Sam. 18. 33. How did *Isaac* mourne for the supposed death of *Ioseph*, Genesis 37. 34, 35. hee rent his clothes, and put sackcloth about his loynes, and sorrowed for a long season, and when all his sonnes and daughters rose vp to comfort him, he would not be comforted, but said, *Surely I will go down into the graue to my sonne, mourning?* And how againe was he reuiued, when hee vnderstood that *Ioseph* was not dead; Gen. 45. 28. where it is noted, that the spirit of *Iacob* reuiued, *And Israel said, I haue enough, Ioseph my sonne is yet alive.* And yet *Iacob* and *David* had many other sons, whose presence might comfort them in the absence of any one that they missed. But *Abraham* was to forgoe his onely sonne, which is the second degree to increase his griefe. For of many to haue offered any one to God, as it were the first fruites of his children, as

Philo speaketh, it had been a lesse matter; but hauing but one, and no hope of more by Sara, his onely wife, to giue him (was) to forgoe all, and with him all hope of posteritie; which might haue pierced his heart with vnspeakeable griefe. Therefore the Scriptures when they would signifie the greatest sorrow that may be, they vse to compare it to the sorrowing of a father for his onely sonne, Amos 8. 10. Zach. 12. 10. And as this might haue caused great griefe, so it required great loue, not onely to forgoe, but willingly to forgoe his onely sonne. For this was a figure of Gods loue to vs, which in the Scriptures is worthily noted to be exceeding great, because he hath giuen his onely begotten sonne for vs, Ioh. 3. 16. Rom. 8. 32. 1 Ioh. 4. 9. 10. But, both his loue of God and cause of griefe for his sonne may greatly be amplified, if you consider in what respects he is called his onely son. For in this word, as Calvin speaketh, there was *repetitio illius*, a doubled and trebled stroake; which might haue wounded his heart. For he is called the only sonne, first in respect of Sara, who

in

in

in regard of him was called *Sarah*, with promise that she should be a mother of Kings and of nations, as *Abram* also by the addition of the same letter (*he*) was called *Abraham*, to signifie that hee should be a father of many nations, Gen. 17. 5. 15. and to put him in minde of this promise, which is crossed by the commandement, vers. 2. the Lord calleth him by his name, *Abraham*, vers. 1. Secondly, he is called his onely sonne simply, after the sending away of *Ismael*, whereunto the Lord in these words seemeth to haue relation, to gall his minde with the memorie of his putting away of *Ismael*, whom also he dearly loued. As though he would signifie vnto him, that he was not contented to haue caused him to put away *Ismael* the sonne of the bondwoman, whom also he loued; leauing vnto him *Isaac* alone; but he will haue him forgðe *Isaac* too, the only child which he had, or could looke to haue by *Sarah*, in respect of whose seede notwithstanding both he and she were promised to be the parents of nations and Kings.

But although *Abraham* loued *Ismael* dearly,

decreely, yet he loued him but a little in
 comparison of *Isaac*, and therefore that
 is added in the third place, *whom thou*
lovest. Indeepe if hee had been a sonne
 whom either he had not loued, or lo-
 ued but with an ordinary loue, the trial
 had been the easier: but now the Lord
 tried him in that which was neereft and
 dearest vnto him, for *Abraham* (as *Iose-*
phus speaketh) *loved Isaac* with
 more then an ordinary loue: first, be-
 cause he was the child of his old age:
 for (as *Philo* saith) parents exceedingly
 loue those which are late borne, and
 this is noted to haue been the cause of
Jacob his extraordinary loue towards
Ioseph, Gen. 37. vers. 3. The reason is
 (saith *Philo*) either because they haue
 long desired them, or because they
 looke for no more: this therefore much
 increaseth the triall in that as *Augustine*
 noteth, *Iubetur filium victimare, solatiū*
paterne senectutis, & unicum pignus posteri-
tatis: qui quanto feriat, tanto dulcior. He
 is commaunded to sacrifice his Sonne,
 the solace of his Fathers old age, and
 the onely pledge of posteritie: who the
 later he was borne, the sweeter he was

This was
 saith *Philo*,
 lib. de *A-*
bram. *Gen.*
37. vers. 3.
 the
 most for-
 cible mo-
 tiue of loue
 because as
 he saith,
 this is the
 reason
 parents
 dote as it
 were, vpon
 those which
 are late
 borne.
De tempore
Serm. 73.

Gal. 4. 22. 23

to his parents. Secondly, because he was the sonne of the free woman, and therefore not onely his legitimate sonne, but that sonne with whom and whose seede the Lord had promised to establish his everlasting covenant, Gen. 17. vers. 19. Thirdly, because he was much desired, long expected, and after many delays (which increaseth the desire Pro. 13. 5. 11) and by many earnest prayers at the length obtained. Fourthly, because he was giuen him of God by miracle, above the course of nature, as a pledge of Gods loue to him. Fifthly, because he was a vertuous, gracious and obedient son; which appeared in the voluntarie submitting himselfe to God and his father euen vnto death, as being therein a type of Christ. And lastly, which I touched before, because he was his onely child. For loue diuided among many is not so feruent. And yet these three degrees, to forgoe his sonne, his only sonne, whom he loued, are nothing to the last. For as was *Isaac* that he was to lose, *Isaac* the ioy of his hart, *Isaac* the pledge of Gods loue, the reward of his faith, the earnest of his saluation, of whom it was said, in

Isaac

Isaac shall thy seede be called, in whose death the promise not onely of posteritie, but also of the *Messias* who was to come of him, might seeme to be repealed and brought to nothing. And therefore with him the Church who was to come of him, might seeme to dye, and in his losse concurred in all apparance the losse of saluation both to himselfe and to all the heires of promise. For no saluation but by *Christ*, who according to the promise of God, was to come of *Isaac*. In the former degrees *Abraham* was to contend with nature and with naturall affection, which I confesse is hard to doe: but in this he was to contend with grace, and to oppose himselfe to the word and promise of God. Why, to bid him offer *Isaac*, was as much in apparance as to bid him rend in peeces Gods couenant, to renounce all assurance of Gods loue, to destroy the Church as it were in the shell, and to cut off all hope of saluation by *Christ*.

And thus haue wee considered the decreenes of the person, whom *Abraham* was willingly to forgoe: now we are to consider the hardnesse of the action

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which

φύσιν γὰρ οὐκ
ἐστὶν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα
μὴ ᾔδῃς
Philo.

which he was to performe, which indeed appeareth to haue been very hard, in respect both of his affection to his son, and of his allegiance vnto God. And in both respects the hardnesse may bee shewed, both by the substance of the worke it selfe, and the circumstances thereunto belonging. The work as you haue heard was, that he should offer vp his sonne vnto God for a burnt sacrifice. The circumstance is twofold, of time and place. The time, both when this commaundement was giuen, and when it was to bee perfourmed. It was giuen (saith the holie Ghost) in the first words of the chapter, *After these things*, which haue relation to the matters contained in the last chapter, although not to the last words of the chapter. That is, after the Lord had commanded *Abraham* to put away *Ismael*, and had giuen him many notable promises in *Isaac*, concerning the multiplying of his seed which should inherit the land of promise, and the blessing of all nations in the promised seed, and for a pledge of his loue had giuen him many temporal blessings, insomuch that Kings were de-

sious

si-rous to enter into league with him. So that now *Abraham* after *Ismael* was gone rested wholly vpon *Isaac*, and as himselfe liued in great prosperitie and fauour of God; so he took this to be his greatest felicitie, that hee was to leaue *Isaac* behinde him the heire of his happines, and the inheritor of the fauour and promises of God: insomuch that now *Isaac* being growne to mans estate (for now hee was as *Iosephus* saith 25. yeares old, as others 33. as the *Seder O-lam*, 37) he began to bethinke him of prouiding a wife for him, that the promise concerning his seede might be performed (as may be gathered by the last euent mentioned in this chapter, whereby the Lord to gratifie his desire, gaue him hope of a wife out of his owne kindred) after these things I say, when *Abraham* was in the height of his prosperitie, and in the toppe of his felicitie, resting wholly vpon *Isaac*, and living in certain expectation of the accomplishment of the promises made in him, euen then the Lord propoundeth vnto him this commandement, which might crosse all these promises, cut off his happines, and

ouerthrow all his expectation. This circumstance doth greatly increase the triall, which had been farre easier, if this commaundement had been giuen before the eiecing of *Ismael*, with whom alone *Abraham* could haue been contented, as may be gathered out of *Genesis* 17. 18 : before hee had receiued such promises, or conceiued such hope of the performance thereof in *Isaac*, or had tasted so plentifully of Gods blessings, which now he hoped to leaue to *Isaac*, as the inheritour of his happines, and of Gods fauour : for the more a man hath to leaue to his child, the more he is grieved if he lose his only child.

As touching the time when this commaundement was to be performed : he must take him presently without further respite : for so hee saith, *Take now*, vers. 2. but he must offer him three daies after, vers. 4. that is, although this work was most hard, in mans iudgment most vnreasonable, and in shew most cruell and barbarous : yet he must deny himselfe and his owne reason, and without further consultation not onely resolute to doe it, but also addresse himselfe to this

this worke. But hauing once resolued, and being entred into the action, hee should not offer him vntill the third day. He might haue bidden him presently to dispatch, to ridde him of this care and grieffe, or if he would needes haue him goe into the countrey of *Moriah*, (because there was the place which after he would chuse for his worship and seruice, 2.Chron. 3.1. where also our Sauiour offred himselfe vpon the crosse, of which sacrifice this immolation of *Isaac* was a type) yet he might haue concealed it from him, as *Abraham* in his fatherly care concealed it from *Isaac*, vntill he came to the place, because hee would not macerate his sonne with a tedious expectation of death. The which circumstance also doth adde great weight to the triall, especially if you consider the manifold exceptions, which his own knowledge set on work by his affection could object, and the cunning obiectiōs which Satan would suggest, and those diuerse occurrents which might happē in the meane space, especially the continuall companie of *Isaac*, whom he could not behold with-

out great remorse, his sweete conuersation and amiable speeches, which might make him relent. So that by this delay

+ *Abrahams* faith and constancie was strongly assaulted, and his heart being resolute was macerated with the expectation of this dreadfull sacrifice. It is truly said, *Acerbissima est mora qua trahit penam*: And many times the long expectation of death, is worle then death it selfe.

The place also, howsoever in general termes it was declared that it should be one of the hills in the countrey of *Moriah*, which was distant from *Beerseba*, where *Abraham* receiued this charge, and whither he returned vnto his familie, vers. 19. as *Lyra* saith 20. leagues, as *Luther* & others 10. Germane miles: yet in particular the place was not defined: but for the greater triall of his faith and obedience (as in his calling out of *Vr*, Heb. 11.8.) left indefinit. For if on an hill, then he might thinke not in an obscure and secret, but an open and conspicuous place; and perhaps in the presence or view hee knew not of whom, and therefore he could not tell what either
danger

danger or offence he might incurre, by sacrificing his son there. And whereas he came not to the place before the third day, you may thinke, either that the place was so farre distant, as that an old man of 125. yeares or upward, traueling on foote, with an asse loaden with all necessities both for the sacrifice and their own prouision, could with conueniencie come thither no sooner, especially being to trauell leisurely; that hee might the better meditate and aduise of that which he went about; or if hee came into the countrey sooner, that the Lord for his greater triall held him in suspence, not shewing him the hill before the third day. So that by the circumstance of time and place, it appeareth that *Abraham* had time enough to bethinke him, that if hee had not beene very resolute, hee might haue desisted from this enterprise.

Now as I said, the worke it selfe was very hard to be performed of him, whether you consider his affection to his sonne, or his allegiance to God. For as touching the former, it had beene a sore matter, as I shewed before, only to haue

forgone his sonne, as appeareth by his
 forgoing *Ismael*, chap. 21. 11. and *Iacob*
 his vnwilling forbearing of *Beniamins*
 presence for a time, *Ge.* 42. 38. especial-
 ly being his onely sonne, the sonne whō
 he loued euen *Isaac* the ioy of his heart;
 more especially to haue forgone him by
 death, and that a violent death (for the
 true parent 1. King. 3. 27. desired rather
 to lose her child altogether, then haue
 halfe of him dead) but most especially
 seeing his death seemed to annihilate
 the promises of God, not only concer-
 ning the multiplication of the Church,
 but also concerning the saluation of
 the faithful by Christ, who was to come
 of *Isaac*: to consent vnto his death had
 been more grieuous, hauing consented
 to deliuer him to death had been dole-
 full, to bee present thereat had beene
 more wofull. The eloquent Poet *Eu-
 ripides*, and the cunning Painter *Timan-
 thes*, were no otherwise able to expresse
 the dolefull countenance of *Agamem-
 non*, being present at the sacrificing of
 his daughter *Iphigenia*, then by coue-
 ring his face: because howsoeuer they
 could decipher the mourning counte-
 nance

Iphigen.
Plin. 35. 10.

nance and dolefull behauour of her other friends, and that in diuers degrees, *See Truly in Orators.* yet they perceiued, neither pen nor pencill could expresse the griefe of a father being present at the death of his childe. What then shall wee say to this worke enioyned *Abraham*, that hee should not onely consent to his sonnes death, nor to deliuer him to others by them to be sacrificed, nor to be present only thereat, which few men could endure (for my part saith *Luther* on this place, *Ego non potuisssem esse spectator, nedum actor & mactator*: I could not haue been a beholder, much lesse an actor or slaughterer) but also that with his own hands he should kill his owne sonne, who was more deere vnto him then his owne life. And how should he kill him? as a burnt sacrifice: that is, first he was to binde him and to lay him vpon the altar, then to cut his throate, after hee was to sprinkle his blood round about vpon the altar, then was he to cut him in peeces, and hauing pulled out his entrailes, and washed them in water, he was to burne all on the altar, himselfe making and tending the fire, and putting

Leuit. x. 5. xx

ting euery part as it should fall out from the rest into the fire againe, vntill all were consumed to ashes: which is signified by the phrase of speech which God vseth, *vehagnalehu sham legnólah*, and make him ascend there (namely in smoake) as a whole burnt offering, whereof nothing remaineth but ashes. And all this was to be performed of a most tender hearted father in his owne person, to his deere and only childe. Whose bowels earne not to thinke of this fact, who would not swourne to see it, who would not dye rather then doe it? And not only his affection towards his son might haue hindred him from this act, but much more his allegiance to God, even his obedience and his faith which here the Lord tried. And whereas in other temptations the word of God is our helmet of saluation to defend our selues, and the sword of the spirit to offend our enemies; in this temptation *Abraham* found the greatest opposition against him in the commandements and promises of God. And surely (beloued) if God assault vs with his word, wherewith in other temptations he doth arme

vs,

vs, how shall any man hope to stand ?
 And yet this was *Abrahams* case. For if
Abraham would shew himself obedient
 to the law of God, then should hee not
 doe that which was in it selfe vnlawful,
 and vnnaturall, dishonourable to God
 and scandalous to men. But this fact
 was condemned by the law of God,
 who as hee forbiddeth the shedding of
 innocent blood, Gen. 9. 6. so he allow-
 eth it not in sacrifices. But *abegm doria* Sacrificing
 which was acceptable to the Gods of of men.
 the Heathen, who were diuels, was most *Psalm 106. 37*
 abominable to the Lord. As for him,
Augustine saith *De temp. Serm. 73. Deus*
pro nobis iussit filiū suū occidi, non nostros
immolari : God commaunded his sonne
 to be slaine for vs, and not ours to be
 sacrificed. And if homicide be condem-
 ned, can parricide be allowed ?

It was vnnaturall, and against the
 law of nature for a father to kill his
 guiltlesse childe : for euen the brute
 beasts themselues doe loue and cherish
 their owne broode. Dishonourable to
 God, as though hee delighted in such
 cruell and vnnaturall sacrifices, or as
 though he would haue men shew their
 religion

Mich. 6. 7.

religion by committing parricide. Scandalous in respect of the Canaanites, amongst whom there was yet no such practise, as *Philo* saith, who might haue condemned his religion, and abhorred his God for this one practise. Scandalous in respect of posteritie, who would be readie to imitate his example. For euen hypocrites, if outwarde seruice would serue their turne, would not stick to offer the fruit of their bodie, for the sinne of their soule. Scandalous to his seruants, who would either haue bound him for a mad man, or finding him in his wits haue detested him and his profession as bloodie and barbarous. But scandalous especially to *Sarah* his wife, who how she would haue taken the slaughter of her most deerely beloued and onely sonne, in regard of whom she was called *Sarah*, a Princeesse, and promised to be the Queenemother of the Princes and people of God, and the great grandmother of the Messias, whō God had giuen her by miracle, especially being committed by *Abraham* himselfe, and without her priuitie and consent, I leaue it to your wisdomes to iudge.

iudge. For if *Zipporah* when she was appointed by *Moses* onely to circumcise her sonne, did cast the foreskinne at his feete, and said, *Thou art indeed a bloodie husband vnto me* : and thereupon (as *Tremellius* and *Iunius* note vpon *Exod.* 4.25. and 18.2.) in a rage refused to go any further with him : in what a case doe you thinke would *Sara* haue been, when she should haue vnderstood, that *Abraham* with his owne hands had killed her onely sonne, and in that manner which before I haue described. And shall *Abraham* now shew his obedience in doing that which in it selfe was vniust, vnnaturall, dishonourable to God, and scandalous to men? And as touching his faith, if *Abraham* would approoue himselfe to be faithfull and to beleue the promises of God, then will hee not commit that, whereby in all apparance the promises are ouerthrowne. The promises were principally two : the first concerning the multiplication of the Church in *Isaacs* posteritie, which was to inherit the land of Canaan : the second, concerning the saluation of the faithfull in all nations, by the promised
seede

seed, which is Christ, who according to the promise was to come of *Isaac*. And shall *Abraham* now approue his faith, by killing *Isaac*, and consuming him to ashes? Nay rather this might seeme a voluntarie extinguishing of y^e Church, and a wilfull renouncing of saluation by Christ. Didst thou belecue *Abraham* in the promised seede, and was this thy faith imputed vnto thee for righteousness, and can it now stand with thy faith to kill *Isaac*, in whom alone thou hast these promises? *In Isaac shall thy seede be called*, chap. 21. 12. *With Isaac and his seed* (saith the Lord) chap. 17. *will I establish mine everlasting covenant, &c.* Doest thou belecue to bee saued by Christ, who was to come of *Isaac's* seed, and wilt thou with thine owne hands kill him, of whom he is to come?

And this was the triall whereby God proued *Abraham's* faith and obedience. Now let vs consider how *Abraham* approued himselfe in this triall. For howsoever this triall was exceeding great, yet was not he tried aboue the strength which God had giuen him. And first consider how he approueth his obedience.

ence. For *Abraham* behaueth not himselfe, as any one of vs would perhaps haue done in the like case, alleaging for himselfe and his sonne: Alas he is my sonne, mine onely sonne, whom I deere-ly loue, euen *Isaac* the ioy of my heart, without whom I can neither looke for the multiplication of a blessed seede, nor saluation by the *Messias* who is to come of him: if therefore I should but forgoe him, it were death to me, if I should consent and be present at his slaughter, it were worse than death: if I my selfe should shed his innocent blood and bereaue him of his pretious life, if I should butcherlike slaughter him and cruelly burne his beloued body to ashes, it were a hell vnto me in respect of that affection which I doe, and as I am a father ought to beare him. Besides, this standeth not with mine obedience to God, to commit such an act which is so vniust, vnnaturall, dishonourable to God, and scandalous to man; nor yet with my faith in his promises, to kill him in whom they are made; and therefore I will rather die then I will thus de-
prive my selfe of my sonne, the world of
the

the Church which is to be his seede, or the faithfull of their Sauour which is to come of him. But *Abraham* although in his fatherly affection he were as tender hearted as the best of vs, and in his wisdom did see and consider all these impediments; yet notwithstanding he was content to deny his affection, yea and his reason, and to performe simple and absolute obedience to God. For he might thinke; God hath reuealed his will vnto me in this commaundement, so as I cannot possibly doubt but that it is the oracle of God; to this will of God therefore must I submit my selfe. What though *Isaac* be deere to me, yet I must not loue him more then God; yea, for Gods sake I must be willing to forgoe him. God hath promised his sonne to me, and shall I denie my sonne to him? And what though it shall seeme an vniust thing to kill my guiltlesse sonne, yet I am sure it is more vniust not to obey God. And although I am to be vnwilling to sacrifice my sonne, if it pleased God otherwise, yet must I be more vnwilling to disobey God. And what though it seeme vnlawfull and
contrary

contrary to the law of God, yet I know it is not. Indeece to kill a man vpon a priuate motion, without sufficient warrant and authoritie, is fearefull murder: but I haue sufficient authoritie, yea an expresse commaundement from God, and therefore so farre that I be from sinning if I sacrifice *Isaac*, as that I shall fearefully sinne, if I doe it not. But you will say, hath not God forbidden the shedding of innocent blood? Yea, but the Lord who is the supreme lawgiuer, hath this prerogatiue royall to dispense with his own lawes, and may if it please him commaund things aboue the common course of iustice; his will, which is the rule of iustice, hauing this priuiledge, that whatsoeuer hee willeth is therefore iust, it being a meere impossibilitie that hee who is goodnes and iustice it selfe, should either will or doe any thing which is not iust; and consequently all his commaundements are to be vnderstood with this exception or restraite; *Nisi Deus aliter voluerit*, Vnlesse God appoint otherwise. As for example, the law forbidding manslaughter is thus to be vnderstood, vn-

E

vnlesse

August. de
temp. ser. 72.

ynlesse God appoint or authorize a mā
to kill, as the lawfull Magistrate, and
the warrior in lawfull battaile. This
particular commaundement therefore
giuen vnto me of God, is my sufficient
warrant to sacrifice my sonne, the ge-
nerall commaundement to the contra-
rie notwithstanding. And therefore to
conclude, *Attendis quis feriat, & quem
feriat? attende quis iubeat*: Doe you
marke who striketh, and whom he stri-
keth? marke also who commaundeth,
and acknowledge with me that the bare
shew and apparance of sinne, should
not driue me into a manifest and appa-
rant sinne. Besides, God almightie is a
soueraigne Lord ouer all his creatures,
hauing absolute authoritie of life and
death, who may kill or preserue, or any
waies dispose of his owne as pleaseth
him, Matth. 20. 15. and therefore if hee
will he may iustly take away the life of
any man by what meanes he pleaseth,
although there were no cause of death
in him. But there is also cause of death
in my sonne, and in all men since the
fall, seeme they neuer so innocent. For
1. Cor. 15. 22 as in *Adam* all haue sinned, and haue
made

made our selues subiect to death: so the Lord may iustly, when it pleaseth him, take vs out of this life, and by what meanes it pleaseth him. It is appointed vnto all men once to dye, and this debt we owe to God in respect of our sinne, which debt also he may claime when it pleaseth him. Neither may hee bee thought to deale hardly with my sonne or any of his children, whose daies hee shortneth, seeing hee recompenceth their mortall life with immortalitie. *Hab. 9. 27.*

And what though he be my sonne, yet seeing I haue the commaundement of God to offer him, this ought to be an inducement to me, rather then otherwise. For if he were a straunger or my seruant, I might well suspect my selfe, lest by any sinister affection I were moued to enterprise this work. But seeing it is my sonne, whom I loue aboue all things but God, nothing but the pure loue of God could perswade me to offer him.

*Felix orbis
foret, si om-
nes sic fierent
parricida.*

And lastly, what though many inconueniences are like to follow? what though I shall seeme to cut off the promises as it were at the roote, yet my du-

*Zeno. Vero-
nens.*

tie is not to be a quariste to dispute of Gods commaundement, but simplie to obey his will, and to commit the euent to God.

And as his obedience was absolute and simple, so also resolute and serious, as appeareth by these particulars: first, in that he acquainted not *Sara* or any other with his purpose, by whose perswasions and intreaties hee might perhaps haue beene hindred. Secondly, that when he saw the place a farre off, he would not suffer his two seruants to goe with him, vers. 5. lest perhaps they would haue hindred him, condemning him of dotage: of which excuse an vnresolute man would haue beene glad. Thirdly, in that he bindeth *Isaac*: for although *Isaac* when he vnderstood the will of God willingly submitted himselfe, when as for his strength he might easily haue resisted (for he was of yeeres 25 at the least, when his father was 125, of strength sufficient to carrie, and that vp the hill, wood enough to consume himselfe to ashes) yet lest any thing might haue happened at the very instant, through the naturall feare of present

Neither must that trouble vs that he is called *Nag-maz*, vers. 5. which is translated a

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sent death, which is common to all, and naturall commotion of the parts and members of the bodie, struggling against the sense of paine, he thought good to preuent the worst. And so resolute was *Abrahams* purpose to sacrifice his son, as that the Lord esteemed it as done. For so he saith, vers. 16. *Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thine only sonne:* And the Apostle Heb. 11. 17. plainly affirmeth, that *Abraham* when he was tempted, offered his sonne. To which purpose some expound those words, vers. 19. that hee receiued him from the dead by a similitude: for so resolute was *Abrahams* purpose to offer him, as that in his opinion, who not once suspected a triall, *Isaac* was but a dead man. When as therefore he was spared by the commandement of God, he esteemed it as if he had receiued him from the dead.

3. It was readie and speedie. For although there were many difficulties, as you haue heard, and many impediments to hinder him, yet was not hee long in resoluing, and in ouercomming them. Who would not haue bin daunted

child, for so are the two seruants called, vers. 3. 5. (whom *Philo* supposeth to haue been *πρωτογονατος*, the ancientest in the familie) and *Isaac* when he was (as the Hebrewes thinke) 56. yeeres old, *Exod.* 33. 11. and *Dauids* souldiers *2. Sam.* 1. 15.

ted and amazed at such a charge? who would not haue been at his wits end? who would not at the least haue sought delaies, or desired respite? But *Abraham* early in the same morning ariseth, vers. 3. and presently addresseth himselfe to this worke.

4. And although it were speedie, yet was it not headie and for a brunt, but discrete, couragious, and constant. His discrete cariage of this action appeareth in all the particular actions and speeches mentioned in this narration, which *Moses* hath to this purpose particularized, as y he prouided wood and other necessities, that he loaded an asse with wood and food, that he tooke two of his seruants to attend him, and so of the rest; all which he did to so good end and purpose, as that it might appeare that this his behauiour was not a fantastickall fitte, or melancholy mood, but a discrete and temperate action, vnder-taken with due aduice and mature deliberation, managed by rare wisdom and singular discretion. And therefore the Lord delaied the execution of this work vnto the third day, that he might
not

not onely proue, but also approue the obedience of *Abraham* in this behalfe, as being not performed on a sudden motion, or vnadvisedly, but with aduised deliberation.

His courage and constancie appeareth in this, that hauing once resolved, and being entered into this action, nothing could hinder him from effecting the same, but the voyce of God from heauen: not the affection to his sonne, not his sweet cōpanie; not his amiable speech, vers. 7. which might haue moued a heart of flint, when as *Isaac hostia, de hostia patrem interrogat*: *Isaac* being the sacrifice, questioneth with his father concerning the sacrifice, and receiueth this answer, *God will provide, my sonne*; not the consideration of the contrarie commandements of God, or repugnancie of the promises: but stedfastly persisteth in his course. And hauing already trauailed two daies, enduring al occurrents in the meane time, which beating vpon him as waues vpon a firme rocke were dashed and repelled: and now seeing the place, the sight whereof might haue daunted him; and hauing

Chrysost.
rom. 2. ser. 33

A caption
in respect
of their vn-
derstanding,
taking, that
properly
which was
spoken by
a Synecdo-
che (*vve wil
returne*) and
a prophetic
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Ghost di-
recting his
speech ac-
cording to
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manded his seruāts to stay with the asse,
vsing a cunning speech vnto them, that
they for want of a beast to be sacrificed,
should suspect nothing; without shew of
passion and perturbation, with cheere-
full countenance & constant mind he
perfourmeth all those actions which
were the forerunners of the sacrifice, e-
uery one representing vnto him the
death and slaughter of his sonne, which
was to be committed by himselfe: He
laieth the wood vpon his sonne (as the
crosse was laid on Christ) with purpose
(tender heart) to burne him vpon it,
himselfe takes the fire and the knife in
his hand; a knife & fire, the sight where-
of, if you respect his intent, might haue
cut his heart, and burnt his entrailes:
and so they two went together, which
y^e holy Ghost hath twice noted, ver. 6. 8.
partly to moue compassion in the hear-
er, when he should cōsider this couple
who they were, with what minde and
to what end they went together, the in-
nocent and obedient sonne suspecting
nothing, carying wood to burne him-
selfe, and a kinde and louing father, ca-
rying a knife to kill his sonne, and fire
to

to burne him that was deerer vnto him
then his owne life. Such a passage (saith
Luther) is not to be found againe in all
the Scriptures : and partly to note the
inuincible constancie of *Abraham*, who
hauing left his two seruants behind, and
being not onely occasioned by his sons
speech, which could not but goe neere
him, but also importuned as it were by
the opportunitie of the solitarie place
to vtter his griefe (which otherwise a
man would thinke should haue burst
his heart) notwithstanding he neither
sends *Isaac* before, nor bids him come
after : either that hee might haue lesse
cause of griefe if hee were not present
and in his sight, or more opportunitie
to griue if hee were a little absent and
out of his hearing, but without shew of
passion accompanieth him to the very
place, where he buildeth an Altar, cou-
ereth the wood, yfeth no doubt some
effectuall speech to perswade his sonne,
when it cannot be sufficiently maruei-
led how he could perswade himselfe: ha-
uing perswaded him, he bindeth him af-
ter the manner of sacrifices, *Ne impa-*
tientia doloris victima calcitraret : Lesse
through

erm. 73.
De tempore

through impatience of griefe his sacrifice should kicke or sling, as *Augustine* saith: hauing bound him hand & foote, hee laieth him on the Altar vpon the wood, stretcheth out his hand, taketh his knife with purpose presently, I tremble to speake it, presently I say to cut his throate, to dismember his body, and after to set fire to the wood, that as a whole burnt offering he might be consumed, leauing nothing to himselfe in apparance of all his hopes and expectations but a few ashes. But blessed be God, in the very nicke as he was giuing the fatall wound, as appeareth by the sudden crie of the Angell, *Abraham, Abraham*, hee is staied from his purpose, and commended for his obedience; euen as if he had sacrificed his sonne, the Lord (to whom obedience is more acceptable then sacrifice, 1. Sam. 15. 22.) accepting of the sincere will and earnest endeouour of his seruant for the deede it selfe.

1. Iob. 5. 4.

But although *Abrahams* obedience was singular, yet his faith, which was the ground of his obedience and his victorie in the temptation, was more wonderfull:

wonderfull: and therefore the Apostle
saith, Heb. 11. 17. *By faith he offered Isaac.*
For *Abraham* had receiued a double o-
racle from God, the one a promise con-
cerning *Isaacs* seede, the other a com-
mandement concerning the burning
of him to ashes before he had any seed.
These 2. oracles in mans reason are cō-
trarie one to another, and nothing but
faith can reconcile them. How then was
Abraham to behaue himselfe in this re-
pugnancie of Gods oracles? He knew
certainly that the commandement was
the word of the Lord, and therefore re-
solved whatsoeuer should come of it, to
obey it, and to commit the euent to
God; and of the promise he could not
doubt, but that it also was the very o-
racle of God, and therefore resolved to
belecue it, assuring himselfe that al-
though *Isaac* before hee had any seede
were consumed to ashes, yet notwith-
standing God would performe his pro-
mises concerning *Isaacs* seede. But how
can this be? If *Isaacs* seede must inherit
the land of Canaan, and Christ himself
must come of his seed, then must he liue
vntill he haue seede, and not be consu-
med

med to ashes before he haue any : if he die and be burnt to ashes before hee haue seed, according to the commandement, how shall his seed be multiplied, or Christ come of it, according to the promise? Yet such was *Abrahams* faith that he assuredly beleeued, that although *Isaac* were consumed to ashes before he had any seed, yet the promise concerning his seed should be performed: and in this assurance of faith in the promise, hee readily, resolutely and constantly obeyed the commandemēt. But how could he obey the one, and yet belecue the other, seeing the one is contrary to the other? I answered, *Abraham* assuredly beleeued that God as he is true and faithfull, and therefore willing to keepe his promise : so in respect of his omnipotent power and al sufficiency he is able to make good his word, being indeed able to doe any thing, but to denie himselfe or to goe backe from his word. And therefore doubted not but that as hee had receiued his sonne from the dead and barren wombe of *Sara*, as a similitude of death (for thus those words *Heb. 11. 19.* may also be expounded)

pounded) so also the Lord would in respect of his truth and faithfulness, and could in respect of his power, euen out of those ashes restore him vnto life, that his seed might be multiplied, and all nations of the earth might account themselves happie in his blessed seed. And this is testified by the Apostle, Heb. 11. 17. 18. 19. *By faith (saith he) Abraham offered vp Isaac when he was tempted, and he that had receined the promises (which were to be fulfilled in his sonne and his posteritie) offered his only begotten sonne. To who it was said, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. For he considered, or rather concluded, that God was able to raise him vp euen frō the dead, from whence he receined him also after a sort. For as Procopius saith, he pondered in his mind that saying of the Apostle, that God who had made Sarah of barren fruitfull, could also raise vp Isaac from the dead: And therefore as Augustine saith, he beleeued whē Isaac was to be borne, and mourneth not for him when he was to die: his hand is lifted vp to sacrifice him that he might be dead, whose heart was lifted vp to belecue that he might be borne. Abraham doubted*

*not to rise**Serm. de
temp. 72.*

doubted not to belecue when *Isaac* was promised : he doubted not to offer him when he was required againe : neither was his religion in beleeuing, contrarie to his deuotion in obeying. And again, *Credidit suscepturus filium, credidit occisurus* : He beleued when he was to beget his sonne, he beleued when he was to kill him, *ubique fidelis, nusquam crudelis*, euerie where faithfull, no where cruell. And therefore, as another saith, *In spe non denegabat Deo, quod contra spem acceperat ab eo*. In hope hee denied not to God, which against hope, he had receiued from him.

And thus by yndoubted faith in the truth and power of God *Abraham* reconciled the repugnancie betwixt the commandement and the promise, and so approued his singular obedience to the one, and his admirable faith in the other, & in respect of both is propounded to vs and to all posteritie, as a most notable patterne to bee imitated. For beloued, wee are to know that these things they were written for our profit, and therefore we must not be idle hearers of this story concerning Gods pro-
uing

uing, & *Abrahams* approuing his faith and obedience, but we are to apply the same to our vse and edification.

And first from Gods prouing of *Abraham*, wee are to learne that it is his maner to trie the sonnes of men, and by triall to make knowne what is in them, that men might labour aforehand to be sound, and to lay a good foundation against the day of triall. For if men bee indued with grace, the Lord will not haue it smothered, but by triall to bee manifested to his glorie, their comfort, and good example of others. If men be vnfound, and leade their life as it were vpon a stage, he will by triall vnmaske them, that their hypocrisie may be detected & detested. And although none may looke in these dayes to be tempted as *Abraham* was, by a particular commandement from God (because howsoeuer the Lord in former times spake πολυμερως & πολυτροπως, at sundrie times and many wayes to the Fathers, yet in these latter times he hath spoken last vnto vs by his sonne, *Heb. 1. 1.* (and we are not to looke for extraordinarie reuelations and apparitions, but to hearken to the Sonne
of

Gal. 2. 1.
My sonne,
if thou wilt
come into
the seruice
of God, pre-
pare thy
soule to
temptation.

of God speaking vnto vs in the Word) notwithstanding we must looke to bee tried by some other means.

Gods trials are either of the right hand, as some distinguish them, or of the left. Of the right hand are his temporall blessings, either offerd vnto vs, or conferd vpon vs. In respect of temporall blessings offered, hee trieth vs whether we wil make conscience in the gathering and getting of them, as hee tried the Israelites in the gathering of Manna. *Exod. 16. 4.* For if, when anie worldly commoditie is offered to our desire, we make no conscience how we compasse it, whether by lying and falsehood, or any other sinfull meanes, wee shew our selues to bee carnall and profane, seeing for euery trifle of the world we are readie to sell our soules to the diuell: when as indeed the gaine of the whole world (if thou couldst get it) will not counteruaile the losse of thy soule. And therefore if we were good Christians indeed, and citizens of heauen we would be resolu'd not to sinne, and by sin to hazard the losse of our soules, though we may gaine the whole world,

Mar.

-Mar. 8. 36. And as God trieth; so Satan tempteth vs by worldly commodities offered, vsing them as his baits to allure vs to sinne: and therefore we are to bee assured, that when we get them by vn-lawfull meanes; we do with them swallow the hooke of the diuell.

As touching the blessings bestowed, the Lord trieth vs in respect of the vse: whether we will make conscience of im-ploying the according to his appoint-ment, remembring that we are but his stewards euen of these outward gifts, who must giue him an account, how we haue disposed the goods committed to our trust: as namely, whether wee are readie to expose & communicate them to the publike vses of the Church and commonwealth, and to the private ne-cessities of our brethren, as our abilitie shall afford, & their necessity require. For (that I may speake a little of this point, the place wherein I speake requi-ring it at my hands, and the time wher-in we liue giuing me but too iust occa-sion, the charitie of many waxing cold) when wee hauing wealth are made ac-quainted with others wants, the Lord

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trieth

trieth our loue, and he trieth our fidelitie. Our loue, first to God, namely whether wee loue him or the world more. And we are to know that God vseth to trie vs in those things which we loue, as in this example of *Abraham*: for he loueth not God aright, who thinketh any thing too deare for him. *Whosoever therefore hauing this worlds good, seeth his brother haue need, and shutteth vp his compassion from him* (whom he ought to relieue for Gods sake) *how dwelleth the loue of God in him*, saith *John*, 1. Epist. 3. 17. Such a one would be far from offering *Isaac* vnto God, that denieth him a smal part of his goods. Secondly, he trieth thy loue to thy brother, which appeareth to be nothing worth, whē thou canst find in thy heart to denie him, being thy brother in Christ, yea thy fellow member of Christ, some worldly pelfe which thou mightest spare, to whom Christ Iesus hath not denied his owne heart bloud. 3. Yea herein is tried thy loue to Christ thy sauour, who esteemeth that giuen, or denied to him, which is giuen or denied to his poore mēbers. Couldst thou find in thine heart to denie reliefe
to

to Iesus Christ if he were in neede? Take heed then how thou deniest it to thy needy brother who is a member of christ. Remember the excuse which the wicked will make at the day of iudgement, and Christs answer to the same, Matth. 25. 44. 45. for when Christ shal say vnto them, *Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire: for I was an hungred and you gaue me no meat, I was thirsty, and you gaue me no drinke, &c.* they shall take exception, and say: *Lord when saw we thee an hungred or thirstie, &c. and did not minister vnto thee?* But hee shall answer, *Verily I say vnto you, in as much as you did it not to one of the least of these, yee did it not to me.* Again, he trieth thly fidelitie: For if God haue appointed thee to bee his Almoner (as euery rich man is Gods Almoner) then art thou no better then a theefe (for so wouldest thou thinke of thine Almoner) if thou keepest backe from the poore that which God hath commanded thee to giue them.

The trials of the left hand are crosses both temporall and spirituall. The temporall are afflictions: and afflictions are whatsoeuer crosse our desires. And

because afflictions trie mens faith, obedience, loue, patience, therefore they are called temptations or trials, Iam. 1. ver. 2. 3. 1. Pet. 1. 7. Wherefore when we are exercised vnder the crosse, let vs thinke that the Lord as he doth fatherly chastise vs for our sinnes, so he prooueth our faith and patience, what wee are able to beare for his sake, and willing to suffer at his hands that hath suffered so much for vs; whether wee are willing to forgoe our worldly desires for his sake, &c. that so we may be careful to approue our selues to God, that proueth vs. For as *Iames* saith, *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation or trial: for when by triall he shall be found approued, he shall receiue the crowne of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that loue him.* Among others which are afflicted, let parents which forgoe their children or other friends, learne by this triall of *Abraham* how to behaue themselves: For as *Abraham* by the commaundement vnderstood the will of God, so may they by the euent. And as he submitted himselfe to the will of God declared in the commaundement, so must they

Iam. 1. 12.

they to his will revealed in the event. For if we cannot be content to giue the Lord leaue to take them to his mercie when it pleaseth him to call them, what would we doe if the Lord should bid vs with our owne hands to kill them, and to burne their bodies to ashes, especially if they were to vs, as *Isaac* was to *Abraham*? Yea but *Abraham* by reason of the promise knew his sonne should (if he were killed) be restored to life: and hast not thou a better promise of thy sonnes resurrection? *Isaac* if he had bin killed, he should haue risen to haue died againe, as *Lazarus* did: thy sonne shal rise to die no more. He should haue risen with a mortall bodie, thy sonne shall rise with an immortall. And what though he shall not rise again so soone, yet in the meane time his soule is with God, and therefore in better case then if he were still with thee: and his bodie, no otherwise then as seede-graine is committed vnto the earth against the great haruest. And what husbandman weepeth when he committeth his seed to the ground, the common mother of vs all? Yea but his bodie shall be re-

solved into dust. *Thou foole, that which
thou sowest is not quickened, except it die,*
and as it were rot in the earth, *1. Cor. 15.
vers. 36.* And although thy sonnes body
be sowne in corruption, yet it shall be
raised in incorruption; it is sowne in
dishonour, it shall be raised in glorie,
vers. 42. 43.

Spirituell crosses are heresies in iudge-
ment, and common corruption in man-
ners. In respect of the former the Lord
trieth vs, when hee permitteth heresies
to spring vp among vs. For as the Apo-
stle saith, *1. Cor. 11. 19. There must be he-
resies, euen among vs,* which are the true
Church of God, *that those which are ap-
proved amōg vs, might be known.* Therefore
the Lord forewarneth the Iewes, that if
a false prophet should arise among the,
they should not hearken vnto him,
though hee should confirme his doc-
trine by signes and wonders: *For (saith
he Deut. 12. 3.) the Lord your God pro-
ueth you whether you love the Lord your
God, with all your heart, and all your soule.*
Euen so at this day, the Lord suffereth
Poperie, the sinke of heresie and myste-
rie of iniquitie, to spread, and popish
heretikes

heretikes and Idolatours to goe about;
perswading men to an apostasie from
Christ to Antichrist, which they call re-
conciling men to the Pope and Church
of Rome: but is (as I haue proued else-
where) the setting vpon men the marke
of the beast, whereby they are branded
vnto destruction, Reuel. 14. 9. 10. But
this is done for the triall of the faithfull
and sound Christians; and for a iust
iudgment on the vnsound, vpon whom
the Lord sendeth efficacie of error and
strong illusions, that they may belecue
the lying doctrines of Antichrist, be-
cause they haue not loued the truth of
the Gospel, y they might be saued by it.
But blessed be God: howsoeuer Anti-
christ preuaileth in those that doe pe-
rish, as the Apostle saith, yet the Lord
Jesus hath prophesied, that it shall not
be possible for the false prophets and
ministers of Antichrist, to seduce either
totally or finally the elect, Mat. 24. 24.
And as touching corruptions in man-
ners, the Lord suffereth the wicked to
liue among the faithfull to trie them,
Iud. 2. 22. And euen in these times (be-
loued) the godly liue among such a ge-
neration

2. Thess. 2.
10. 11, 12.

Vers. 10.

peration of men, as that if a man doe but labour to keepe a good conscience in any measure, although he meddle not with matters of state, of discipline or ceremonies: As for example, if a Minister diligently preach, or in his preaching seeke to profit rather then to please, remembering the saying of the Apostle, *If I seeke to please men, I am not the servant of Christ*, Gal. 1. 10. Or if a private Christian make conscience of swearing, sanctifying the Sabbath, frequenting Sermons, or abstaining from the common corruptions of the time, he shal straight way be condemned for a Puritano, and consequently be lesse fauoured, then either a carnall Gospeller, or a close Papist. But thus it pleaseth God to try vs whether we haue faith or not, and whether wee preferre the applause of vaine men, before the approbation of the great and glorious God. For what saith our Sauour to the Iewes, Ioh. 5. 44. *How can you beleaue seeing you seeke glorie and estimation one from another, and seeke not that glorie which cometh from God alone?* If therefore thou desirest to be approved for a sound christian, thou must
 .labour

labour to keepe a good conscience, and approoue thy selfe to God who trieth the heart: and not onely contemne the censures of carnall men (whose wisdom is enmitie against God) but also think thy self happie when men speake euill of thee for righteousness sake, Mat. 5. 11. And these briefly are the trials of God, whereunto all sorts of men are subiect, both hypocrites and sound Christians.

Hypocrites, whom the Lord trieth, that they shrinking in their triall and falling away, their hypocrisie may be detected. For (beloued) there bee many which liue in the Church which be not of it, and cannot easily be discerned vntill triall come. But such men as they are vnfound, and by reason thereof subiect to defection, so when they are tried they commonly fall away: and they are suffered to fall, that it might appeare they were not of vs, as *Iohn* speaketh, 1. Epist. 2. 19. For as the fire fornae discerneth the drosse from the mettall, the saune seuereth the chaffe from the corne; so trials put a difference betwixt hypocrites and sound Christians. It behoueth

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 behoueth vs therefore (beloued in the Lord) to lay a good foundation against the day of triall, to build vpon the rock, to take roote inwardly, and to bring forth fruite outwardly, to haue oyle in our lampes; otherwise, if wee content our selues with the greene leaues of an outwarde profession, neither hauing the roote of faith, nor fruits of loue, we shall wither when the sunne of temptation ariseth, Luk. 8. 13. If we build vpon the sand, that is, as our Sauour expoundeth, be hearers and not doers of his word, when the windes of temptations shall blow, and surges of trials shall beate against vs, our building will fall to the ground, Matth. 7. 26. 27. If wee content our selues with the shining lampe of an outward profession, wanting the oyle of inward grace, when the Bridegrome commeth, we shall be shue out.

But the Lord also trieth the faithfull and sound Christians, sometimes to let them see their owne weaknes, that they may be humbled at the sight thereof, and be made more circumspect for the time to come. Sometimes to manifest
 his

his graces in them, both to themselves and others, but alwaies for their good in the end, Deut. 8. 16. And therefore he neuer trieth them aboute their strength, or at least aboute their profit, but proportioneth his trials both to their strength, 1. Cor. 10. 13. and also to their profit, Hebr. 12. 10. and consequently the issue of them is alwaies happie and good: the Lord causing all things (and not onely his trials) to worke together for their good which doe loue him, Rom. 8. 28. And although many times they are brought to that exigent, as that their estate seemeth desperate and remediless, yet euen in the nick when things are at the worst, the Lord (who neuer faileth those which forsake not him) as it were *dominus propter* and beyond all expectation, giueth deliuerance. As in this triall of *Abraham*, vers. 10. 11. and that of *Iob*. And it was well said of *Philo*, when he pleaded the cause of his natiō, being brought to a great exigent, before *Caligula*: It cannot bee but that Gods aide is neere, seeing all mans help faileth vs. Seeing then the trials of the faithfull are profitable and tend
to

to their good; therefore so many of vs
as are sound, are to be so farre frō pray-
ing against these temptations of triall,
as that wee are rather to desire that wee
may be tried, Psalm. 139. 23. and to be
glad when wee are, Iam. 1. 2. 3. 1. Pet. 1.
vers. 6. 7.

The vse in respect of *Abrahams* ap-
proving himselfe is this, that as we pro-
fesse our selues to be the children of *A-*
brabam and heires of promise, so wee
should shew our selues to be the childrē
of *Abraham*, in imitating his obedience
and his faith, to which end the Lord
hath by *Moses* propounded this wor-
thie example, and by me expounded
the same vnto you. And first our obe-
dience must be conformable vnto his.
I say not that it must be equall. For al-
though we must strīue towards this per-
fection, and neuer content our selues
with our growth vntill we come to our
equall, that is, our full growth, which wee
shall neuer doe whiles we liue here, be-
cause in this life wee are alwaies in our
growing age; yet few may
hope to attaine to *Abrahams* pitch. But
though wee cannot be equall to match
him

him, yet we must be like to imitate him in obedience, if wee would be esteemed his children, as the faithfull are. For as our Sauour saith, Ioh. 8. 35. *If you were the sonnes of Abraham, you would doe the workes of Abraham.*

But thou wilt say, If God did speake to me, and commaund me any thing, as he did to *Abraham*, I would doe as *Abraham* did. I answer, thou art to applie every generall commaundement in the word, as spoken vnto thee: and thou art to make conscience of obeying the same, as if God from heauen did now speake vnto thee. For so the Lord hath propounded his commandments, as that thou canst not doubt but that he hath spoken to thee therein. For doth hee not speake to thee, when hee saith, *Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steale, &c.* Nay further I professe vnto thee, that as thou hast greater assurance that God speaketh vnto thee in his word, then if an Angell should speake vnto thee from heauen (for the written word the Apostle calleth *the sure word*, 2. Pet. 1. 19. and if we should trust to extraordinarie reuelations and apparitions

apparitions of Angels, we should bee subiect to the illusions of Satan, who can transforme himselfe into an Angel of light;) so if thou wilt not hearken to the written word of God, to Moses, the Prophets, and the Apostles, neither wilt thou beleeue or obey though an Angel should come from heauen, or a man should come from the dead, Luk. 16.

Well then, when thou hast a commandement from God, do as *Abraham* heere doth. As for example, God commandeth thee to turne vnto him, to repent thee of thy sinnes, to beleeue in Christ, to walke vprightly before him, to sacrifice not thy sonne, but thy selfe, and to offer vp thy soule and thy bodie as a holy, liuely and acceptable sacrifice vnto him, which is thy reasonable, that is, spirituall seruice of him. Be carefull to approoue thy obedience as *Abraham* did. What though inconueniences will follow, what though the world shall condemne thee, and the wicked flout thee, & the diuel & thine owne flesh set themselves against thee: denie thy selfe as *Abraham* did, and thine own reasons dispute not of Gods commandement, but

Rom. 12.1.

but obey it, and commit the euent to God. And let thine obedience bee not onely absolute & resolute, but also speedie without delay, & constant without fainting. Worthie is that saying of *Luther* to bee written in the tables of our hearts, *Qui habet certum verbum Dei, in quacunque vocatione, credat tantum & audeat, & dabit Deus haud dubie secundos exitus*, Whosoever hath the certaine word of God in any calling, let him beleue onely and be bold, & God no doubt will giue prosperous success.

Now if we wold approue our obedience when God proueth vs, as *Abraham* did, wee must be qualified in two respects as he was. For first, seeing the Lord vseth to proue vs in such things as we loue: therefore we are with *Abraham* to thinke nothing we haue too deare to be consecrated to God, but we must be readie to offer as a spirituall sacrifice, if God shall require the same, our goods, our honour, our sonnes and daughters, our parents, our wiues, our liues, our selves; for hee that loueth anie of these more then Christ is not worthie of him,
Matth.

De simp.
form. 72.

Matth. 10. 37. 38. This therefore in a word *Abraham* teacheth vs, as *Augustine* saith, *Vt Deo nos preponamus quod dat Deus*, That we preferre not before God, that which God hath giuen vs.

Secondly, we must (as *Abraham* was) bee resolu'd before hand to obey the commandements of God, seeme they neuer so vnreasonable vnto vs. For this resolution will make the commandements easie to vs, which seem hard to others. As indeed the difficulty of Gods cōmandemēts is to be attributed to the corruptions and contrarie dispositions of men, who haue resolu'd, or at the least inured themselues to do euill: so that it is as easie for them to abstaine from their accustomed sinnes; as it is for a Blackamoore to change his hue, or a Leopard his spots, *Ierem. 13. 23*. It is easie for a sober and temperat man to abstaine from drunkennesse, a chaste man from whoredome, a religious man from swearing, a mild man from chafing and reuenge; but bid a drunkard leaue his drunkennes, a whoremaster to forsake his filthinesse, &c. you may as well bid him pull out his eye, or cut off his hand,

so

so hard a thing it is for them to mortifie their earthly members, fornication, vncleannes, &c. Col. 3. 5. But let God say to an *Abrahā* that is resoluēd to obey him in all things, offer thine only sonne vnto me for a burnt sacrifice, and hee will readily doe it. And as we are to follow *Abrahams* obedience, so must we imitate his faith, and that in two respects: first, in beleeuing the promises of God: secondly, in bringing forth fruites and working by loue.

As touching the former, our dutie is to be resoluēd before hand with *Abraham*, as to obey the commandements of God, seeme they neuer so vnreasonable: so to belecue his promises, seeme they neuer so vncredible.

Thou wilt say, If God did promise me any thing as he did to *Abraham*, I would belecue as hee did. The promises were made to *Abraham* and his seede, that is, the faithfull who are the sonnes of *Abraham* and the heires of promise. And although the promises be generally propounded in the word, yet art thou particularly to apply them to thy selfe as spoken to thee. For being generall

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they

they include al, that exclude not themselves by infidelitie: only bring the condition of the promise which is faith, and thou art safe. For doth not the Lord promise, whosoever beleeueth in Christ hath remission of sin, shall rise to glorie, shall be saued? euen as the Israelites had a promise, that if when they were

Num. 21. 8. stung with the fire Serpents, they did

Ioh. 3. 14. 15 lift vp their eyes to the brazen Serpent,

16. they should be healed. Resolue then to lift vp the eye of faith to him that was figured by the brazen Serpent, to beleue in Christ, labour to lay hold vpon him by faith, strue against thine owne infidelitie and doubting: assure thy selfe, if thou beleuenest, that thou art iustified, and shalt be saued. Let not the sense of thine owne weakenes, or the conscience of thine owne vnworthines, or any thing else, wring from thee thy stedfast faith in Christ: but beleue against sense and reason, and hope against hope as *Abraham* did. This is the promise of God, beleue in Christ,

Mar. 16. 16. and thou shalt be saued. Indeed it pleaseth God many times so to trie his seruants, for the exercise of their faith, as that

that their triall seemeth to oppugne his promises. But yet notwithstanding the promises are firmly to be beleueed, and we are to be perswaded, that when any thing doth happen vnto vs con-^{Luther in Gen. 22.}trarie to the promise, and the Lord shewes himselfe vnto vs otherwise then the promise foundeth (as our Sauour shewed himselfe to the woman which was a Cananite, Matth. 15. 23. 28.) that it is but a trial, whereby the Lord, how-soeuer hee exerciseth vs for a time, will yet doe vs good in the end, Deut. 8. 16. and therefore we are not to let goe our hold, or suffer the promise, which is our staffe and stay, to be wrested out of our hands. Rather let vs imitate *Abrahams* faith in this place, who when hee was commaunded to kil his sonne, in whose seede hee had many promises, yeelded indeed to the commandement, and yet held him to the promise. Though *Isaac* be consumed to ashes, yet shall the promise of God concerning his seede be performed. So *Iob* when he was so grievously afflicted, as that in his own sense, and opinion of others, he seemed to be cast out of Gods fauour, yet (saith he)

Gen. 22. 15.

though he kill me I will belecue in him. In like sort, when as God promisseth life to all that belecue, & yet we die; we must belecue that although we die, yet wee shall liue, Ioh. 11. 25. In a word, we must learne by *Abrahams* example, to giue credite to the truth and power of God, rather then to our owne sence and reason. For he is true, and therefore will, hee is omnipotent, and therefore can performe his promise.

Iam. 2. 18.

Secōdly, our faith must be fruitful, as *Abrahams* was, and we are to manifest it by good works, that the Lord may say of vs, as he did heere of *Abraham*, *Now I know that thou fearest God, &c.* for although good works do not concurre with faith to the act of iustification as anie cause thereof, yet they concurre in the subiect, that is, the partie iustified, as necessarie fruits of his faith, and testimonies of his iustification. And therefore *Abraham* although he were iustified before God, by faith without works, as *Paul* saith, that is, absolved from his sinnes and accepted as righteous vnto life; yet he was iustified not only in that sence by faith, but in another sence, that

that is, declared to be iust by works, as *James* saith. But to this purpose most effectually is *S. James* his argument in the second chap. By such a faith as *Abraham* was iustified, must we be iustified: but *Abraham* was iustified by such a faith as brought forth good works, as appeareth by this example, and was not an idle or dead faith: and therefore that faith wherby we must be iustified must bring forth good fruits, or els it is not a liuely & a true, but a dead & counterfeit faith, by which no man can be iustified. For howsoever faith alone doth iustifie, because it alone doth apprehend the righteousness of Christ, wherby we are iustified, and not loue or any other grace, yet that faith which is alone doth not iustifie, because it is not a true faith. For euen as, the bodie without spirit or breath, is iudged to be dead, so *Lam. 2.26* faith which is without works is dead. And to conclude, howsoever the promise of saluatiō is made to faith, yet the sentence of saluation shall be pronounced according to our works: and therefore let vs be carefull as *Abraham* was to shew our faith by our workes: For

good works are as it were the euidence
according to which the Lord wil iudge
of our faith: in so much that where hee
findeth none, hee will say, *Depart from
me you cursed into everlasting fire.* And
where hee findeth workes giuing eu-
dence to our faith, he will say, *Come you
blessed of my father, inherite the kingdome
which is prepared for you from the founda-
tion of the world.* To which kingdome let
vs beseech him to bring vs, who hath so
dearely purchased it for vs, euen Christ
Iesus the righteous, to whom with
the Father and the holy Ghost
be all praise and glorie
both now, and
euermore.

Amen.

FINIS.

Errata.

Pag. 16. lin. 10. reade, as he knoweth he can
answere. pag. 27. lin. 21. reade, when as. pag 41.
lin. 9. reade, not deliuer. lin. 10. not be present.

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